



Administrative Report

P.3., File # 20-1556

Meeting Date: 10/13/2020

To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
From: MICHAEL W. WEBB, CITY ATTORNEY

TITLE

DISCUSSION REGARDING HALLOWEEN, TRICK OR TREATING, AND COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On September 1, 2020, Councilmember Loewenstein made a motion that was approved unanimously to direct me to bring back a discussion regarding the options available to celebrate Halloween during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, would block parties be allowed as a means of controlling who could be on a given block in order to limit those who are trick or treating to residents of the immediate neighborhood? The short answer is **NO**. Halloween gatherings, events or parties with non-household members are not permitted even if they are conducted outdoors under the current Los Angeles County Department of Public Health rules.

BACKGROUND

Approximately one week after the Council direction to agendize this report, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health announced that a traditional Halloween with trick-or-treaters going door-to-door for candy would not be allowed in Los Angeles County this year because of the coronavirus pandemic. Less than a day later, the Department walked back that prohibition and said that it wouldn't be banned but it was not recommended. Door-to-door trick-or-treating had originally been banned "because it can be very difficult to maintain proper social distancing on porches and at front doors especially in neighborhoods that are popular with trick or treaters," the health department said in a news release.

Halloween activities that are prohibited within the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (which includes Redondo Beach) are:

- Halloween gatherings, events or parties with non-household members are not permitted even if they are conducted outdoors
- Carnivals, festivals, live entertainment, and haunted house attractions are not allowed

Halloween activities that are merely not recommended are:

- Door to door trick or treating is not recommended because it can be very difficult to maintain proper social distancing on porches and at front doors, ensure that everyone answering or

coming to the door is appropriately masked to prevent disease spread, and because sharing food is risky

- “Trunk or treating” where children go from car to car instead of door to door to receive treats is also not recommended, particularly when it is part of Halloween events, since it is difficult to avoid crowding and sharing food

Since gatherings, events or parties with non-household members are not permitted, this would preclude the City from issuing permits for Block Parties.

The national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) use a different framework. They separate Halloween activities into high risk, medium risk, and low risk activities. The higher risk activities the CDC recommends avoiding to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 are:

- Participating in traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed to children who do door to door
- Having trunk-or-treat where treats are handed out from trunks of cars lined up in large parking lots
- Attending crowded costume parties held indoors
- Going to an indoor haunted house where people may be crowded together and screaming
- Going on hayrides or tractor rides with people who are not in your household
- Using alcohol or drugs, which can cloud judgement and increase risky behaviors
- Traveling to a rural fall festival that is not in your community if you live in an area with community spread of COVID-19

Although the CDC recommends avoiding traditional trick or treating they put a modified version in the medium risk category.

- Participating in one-way trick-or-treating where individually wrapped goodie bags are lined up for families to grab and go while continuing to social distance (such as at the end of a driveway or at the edge of a yard). If you are preparing goodie bags, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after preparing the bags.

Such an approach could look something like this:





Some other strategies in using such an approach are having kids wear gloves and/or carry hand sanitizer and setting out some type of markers so children have visual markers for the prescribed six feet of distance.

The CDC also states that a costume mask (such as for Halloween) is not a substitute for a cloth mask. A costume mask should not be used unless it is made of two or more layers of breathable fabric that covers the mouth and nose and doesn't leave gaps around the face. They further recommend that one not wear a costume mask over a protective cloth mask because it can be dangerous if the costume mask makes it hard to breathe. Instead, they recommend using a Halloween-themed cloth mask.

ATTACHMENTS

- LA County Department of Public Health Guidance for Celebrating Halloween
- "Can Halloween Be Saved? Yes, Experts Say. Here's How.", *New York Times*, October 6, 2020